

Trailwalker

Magazine of the Friends of the Heysen Trail

Autumn 2012

Free



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*Tour conditions apply, please enquire for further details

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*Tour conditions apply, please enquire for further details

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Peregrine
TRAVEL CENTRE

Contents



Published by the
Friends of the
Heysen Trail &
Other Walking Trails

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Membership Information

Joining Fee \$10
Single \$20 per year
Family \$30 per year
Schools & Organisations \$50 per year
Membership is valid from the date of payment until the end of the corresponding month in the following year.

Trailwalker Magazine

Views expressed in contributed articles are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the Friends of the Heysen Trail.

The Trailwalker magazine is available by subscription or online at www.heysentrail.asn.au/trailwalker

The Trailwalker magazine is published quarterly:

- Autumn (March)
- Winter (June)
- Spring (September)
- Summer (December)

The Trailwalker magazine has a distribution of 1200, and an estimated readership of approximately twice that number.

Articles, reports and other submissions by members and other interested parties are welcome and should be emailed to the Trailwalker Editor at trailwalker@heysentrail.asn.au

The submission deadline is usually the first Friday of the month prior to the month of publication.

Advertising Rates

1/8 page vertical \$40 per issue
1/4 page \$60 per issue
1/2 page \$100 per issue
Full Page \$150 per issue

Flyer (supplied for insertion)
\$180 per issue

A commitment for 12 months advertising – 4 issues, would attract 10% saving

Advertising specifications and article submission guidelines are available upon request or by visiting www.heysentrail.asn.au/trailwalker

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Issue 123 Autumn 2012

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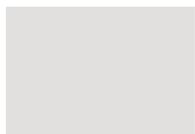
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The Friends of
the Heysen Trail
& Other Walking
Trails

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Mike Parsons
Robyn Quinn
Elizabeth Rogers

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Chris Porter
David Rattray
David Roberts

Wednesdays

Myra Betschild
Gilbert Downs
Wendy Fox
Jack Marcelis

Thursdays

Bob Gentle
Graham Loveday
Julian Monfries

Fridays

Colin Edwards
Sandy Melbourne
Jamie Shephard

Relief Staff

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C. Warren Bonython AO

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David Rattray	Office
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Rodney Rees	Vice President
Sally Fieldhouse	Secretary
Hugh Greenhill	Maintenance
Hugh Greenhill	Goyder Tourism
	Working Party Rep
	Publicity Officer
Celia Manning	

Council Meeting Dates

Wednesday 21 March 2012
Wednesday 18 April 2012
Wednesday 16 May 2012
Wednesday 20 June 2012

Winter Trailwalker Deadline

Friday 4 May

Articles, reports and other submissions are welcome from: members walking on the Heysen Trail or elsewhere; non-members walking the Heysen Trail; other interested parties.

To submit an article, contact the Editor at trailwalker@heysentrail.asn.au.

Contributors are urged to contact the Editor to discuss their article prior to submission.

Honorary Members

Terry Lavender*
Jim Crinion
Neville Southgate
Doug Leane*
Fred Brooks*
Sadie Leupold
Thelma Anderson
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Richard Schmitz
Arthur Smith
Colin Edwards
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Jamie Shephard
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Terry & Frances Gasson
* (deceased)

Trailwalker Editor

Jeremy Carter

Membership Secretary

David Rattray

Office Coordinator

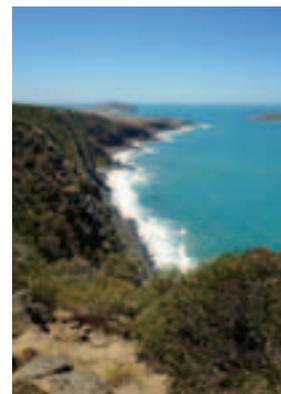
David Rattray

Maintenance Coordinator

Colin Edwards

Bookkeepers

Jeanette Clarke
Yi Lu (Eva)
Zhao Jiaying (Jessie)



Cover

Waitpinga Cliffs with The Bluff
in the distance, east of Victor Harbor
Robert Alcock, Jan 2012

President

A Word from the President

Robert Alcock

Wow, January has already gone, and most of us are now into the routine of 2012. The festive season is a memory, as are the wonderful walks from last season. Our 25th anniversary has now passed, and the Burra Branch its 20th. We now commence the next 25 / 20 year period, working and walking on the Heysen Trail.

We had a lot of members who travelled overseas in the second half of 2011. They have returned home from many parts of the planet, with tales of walking and touring. As you walk with them this walk season, question them, to find the experiences that will inspire you to find new places and new walks. It's one of the great benefits of walking with a group such as ours.

Our Twilight walks have been well patronised, and I too have enjoyed a few good social dinners after these walks. It's a good way to keep in touch, meet new people and stretch the legs over summer. It also gets us to different places, to see more pretty areas, tucked away from our normal living environment.

Working closely with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, we now have four new water tanks on the southern section of the Heysen Trail. As well as providing water to walkers, the tanks are well located at pleasant spots suitable for rest breaks. Many thanks go to the team of workers who installed them. To complete this project, funded by the Friends', planning is underway to install another seven tanks further north, in coming months.

As an organisation we are fortunate to be well supported by local businesses, especially those who pay to advertise in the Trailwalker. Check out the ads in this edition – in any edition – for information, tours, services and products you may need, and please support those businesses that support the Friends.

Get together with friends and do whatever walks you can to keep up the fitness. A new walk season will be here before we know it.

May you walk many kilometres, in comfortable boots.



Larapinta Trail
...expand your horizons

Join the Friends traversing the West MacDonnell Ranges in the Northern Territory along the famous Larapinta Trail. Situated in the heart of Central Australia, the Larapinta Trail extends over 223 km along the backbone of the ranges.



- > Climb Mount Sonder
- > Traverse sheltered gorges
- > Meander through numerous gaps and chasms
- > Swim in crystal clear water holes
- > Climb over rugged ranges
- > Enjoy stunning views
- > Camp out under the stars

21 July to 12 August 2012

This walk is not for the faint-hearted and is for walkers with above average fitness, however we plan to hold training walks to improve fitness levels. It is anticipated that all participants will complete the full trail.

Estimated price - \$2350 approx ex-Adelaide with overnight stop at Coober Pedy each way (cabin accommodation available at extra cost.)

Price includes:

- > 3 quality high energy meals per day plus snacks
- > All coach travel & transfers, tents, air mattress, camping fees or cabins
- > All camp meals & a couple of club meals in Alice Springs
- > Director chairs, trestles & eating utensils.



Friends of the Heysen Trail AGM

The 25th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Heysen Trail and Other Walking Trails Inc will be held at 7.30 pm on Friday, 23rd March 2012 at Woodville Lawn Bowling Club, Oval Avenue, Woodville South.

More details, including the agenda and details of the election of council members, can be found on page 18.

WA's Bibbulmun Track Wins Silver at Tourism Awards

Western Australia's Bibbulmun Track won the Silver Medal in the Tourist Attraction category at the recent 2011 WA Tourism Awards.

Congratulations to the volunteers and staff at the Bibbulmun Track Foundation!

More info:
www.trailtalk.com.au
www.tourismcouncilwa.com.au



Upgrade of Waterfall Gully Track Completed

The \$1.2 million upgrade of the popular Waterfall Gully to Mt Lofty track was completed in late November.

The four kilometre upgrade has been completed in stages over the past three years. The trail alignment, surface, drainage and signage has been upgraded. More rest areas, including an area safe for children to play and explore, have also been included.

An estimated 400,000 walkers enjoy the trail each year.

New Zealand's 3,000 km Walking Trail Opens

Three ceremonies in New Zealand on 3 December officially opened the 3,000km Te Araroa walking trail. Te Araroa, meaning 'the long pathway', is a national foot trail running the length of country.

The trail explores New Zealand's unique landscape, its volcanoes, its range and mountain uplift, its rivers, lakes and valleys. From Cape Reinga at the top of the North Island it traverses the length of the country down to Stirling Pt in Bluff at the bottom of the South Island. Envisioned in 1975, it was not until the late 90s that material progress was achieved. Some 45% of the trail consists of smaller trails linked together, the remaining 55% consists of new trails. Just 13.5% is along roads.

By the mid-2000s and well ahead of the trail's completion, eager walkers were already hitting the trail - up to 10 a year, using roads as by-passes where necessary. It is predicted that about 100 people will walk the length of the trail annually, 7000 people will walk overnight sections and 350,000 people will use the trail for day walks.

Further info can be found on the Te Araroa website:
www.teararoa.org.nz



New Water Tanks and Campsites along the Heysen Trail

Some years of planning, budgeting and design finally lead to the installation of the first four, of eleven, new water tanks along the Heysen Trail. The tanks, purchased by the Friends, and installed by the Friends and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) are the forerunner to more new tanks along the Trail.

The initial four have been constructed on the southern part of the Trail, variously at Balquhidder, Robinson Hill (near Inman Valley), Mount Cone and the Finnis River, at sites also suitable for camping, two with spectacular views.

With seven more to be installed over the coming year, we should finally see the gaps in the Trail, for water replenishment, closing.

The installation was a two phase operation, with the first being the concreting of the support frame into the ground and the second installing the tank and downpipes, collection panels and seat.

The construction team consisted of Colin Edwards as site foreman, John Potter as concrete mixer and roofer, Bob Gentle and Albert Schmidke as diggers extraordinary, Peter Solomon as track cutter and general roustabout, Simon Cameron as jack hammerer and Julian Monfries as photographer and general layabout. After some initial hiccups, the team became a finely honed squad. Bronte Leak, from DENR, also put in a mighty effort in the first phase.

All we need now is some rain.

See more photos at www.bit.ly/new-campsites



Di Walker to Climb Mera Peak

One of our members, Di Walker, is in training for a charity hike to Nepal's 6470m Mera Peak, raising funds and awareness for the work of Centacare – specifically for Auricht house.



Auricht house provides respite care for the families of young people with an intellectual disability. Auricht House is named in memory of the late Mark Auricht who dedicated his 2001 Mount Everest summit attempt to Centacare and in particular supporting the establishment of the new respite service.

Di is off to Mera Peak for 24 days from 14 April to 9 May.

If you are interested in donating money to Di's fundraising effort – all funds raised go to Auricht House at Centacare – more information can be found at www.bit.ly/di-walker, or you can donate online at www.everydayhero.com.au/Di_Walker, or by contacting either Bernie Victory at CentaCare via bvictory@centacare.org.au or 08 8210 8200, or Di at walker.diannem@gmail.com



News

Office Report

David Rattray, Office Coordinator

The Summer Twilight Walk season is almost over and the 'real' walking season is almost upon us. The office has been gearing up for the new walking season. We have answered many enquiries about End-to-End 7 and End-to-End Minus One.

Staffing

We say farewell to Dawn Bon, a Tuesday volunteer for 15 years. We will miss her enthusiasm for the Heysen Trail. All is not lost, however, as Dawn has agreed to join the relieving staff. We welcome Glenn Marland who has commenced his training to become an office volunteer.

Any member may become an office volunteer but be aware basic computer skills are needed. Leave a message for me at the office if interested.

Walk Bookings

Members and potential new members are reminded that walk registrations open four weeks before the walk and that the office can not take bookings until registrations open. The best advice I can give is to check on the website for when a walk's registration will open, and register promptly when it opens. Both End-to-End 7 and End-to-End -1 numbers are limited due to a bus constraints.

Member's email address and Membership Details

Members are advised by an automatic email at various stages that their membership is about to expire and just before the membership record is archived. While the office endeavour to ring members who do not have an email address this is not always possible. Consequently if you have an email address, I urge you to update your membership record or advise the office. About 40 members have an incorrect email address listed. Your membership will cease automatically if not renewed within two months.

Members can now update their membership details online. For details on how to do this refer the last edition of The Trailwalker (Summer 2012 Issue 122).

Membership Statistics

Our current membership numbers are 777 with 169 new members joining in 2011; this is a slight increase over the previous year. Additionally we have 145 organisations (landowners, visitor centres and regional libraries) on our membership database. The number of members dropped in October 2011 due to a change in the way we reported memberships – 150 members, whose membership had lapsed were immediately archived, rather than waiting up to nine months as had occurred with the previous reporting system.

Find us on Facebook Follow us on Twitter

Find us on Facebook, search for *Heysen Trail – The Spin Cycle*, and Like the page to add it to your feed. Reply with a comments or add a new photo or comment.



Follow us on Twitter – join the conversation for the latest trail updates and links to blogs and news items. Find us with the tag *@HeysenTrail*. You don't need a Twitter account to view the latest trail updates, visit <http://twitter.com/HeysenTrail>



Hut and Water Tank Survey

The annual hut and water tank survey, from Elatina Hut in the north to Freemans Hut at Wirra Wirra Peaks, was recently undertaken. All the tanks were found to be either full or near capacity. The huts are all in good condition and ready for the opening of the walking season, albeit still a month or two away.

Thank You to our Previous Editor, Hilary Gillette

Thanks go to our previous Trailwalker editor, Hilary Gillette for her valuable contribution over the past three years in producing this quarterly magazine. The council and members would like to take this opportunity to thank Hilary for her time and energy in chasing contributors, layout out the contents and bringing it all together, ready for the printer. There has always been good positive feedback from members and readers. We wish her the best in her future endeavours.

Walking Committee Report

Arrienne Wynen, Walk Committee Chair

The new walk season is about to start and the hot days of summer will shortly be just a memory. Our Twilight Walks have been well attended and hopefully have assisted you to maintain some fitness in preparation for the coming hiking season. There is a full program planned with End-to-End 7 starting on April 29 as well as End-to-End 4, 5 and 6 continuing their journey.

Other highlights include the Larapinta Trail in July and the reverse End-to-End starting at Parachilna in August. These last two walks are for experienced walkers only.

The program provides walks for different levels of fitness. When booking check the walk description and conditions to ensure that you have booked a walk suitable for your ability.

With such a full program we are always looking for more walk leaders and each year we run a walk leaders training day. This day is for anyone who might be interested in becoming more involved and would like to learn about the Friends. Attending does not obligate you to lead walks but will give you a chance to see the process and meet some of the people already involved. The next training day will be on Sat May 19, there is no cost but you need to book on-line or via the office. Hope to see you there.

Maintenance Report

Colin Edwards, Maintenance Coordinator

Since the last issue of the Trailwalker there has been plenty of activity on the Trail – some good, some not so good and some bloody awful. A major bushfire north of Horrocks Pass has destroyed stiles and markers, as described in Michael Kerin's excellent report in this issue. There have been floods in Burra and Tourilie Gorge which will give Hugh Greenhill and his group some restoration work to do.

In the meantime a team of happy workers consisting of John Potter, Julian Monfries, Simon Cameron, Bob Gentle, Peter Solomon, Albert Schmidke and yours truly have managed to complete the construction of tank shelters at Balquidder, Robinson Hill, Mount Cone and Finnis together with markers and stiles. A big thanks to the crew who are all anxious to get on to the remaining seven sites north of Kapunda!

As usual the work never stops keeping the Trail in good condition and there are numerous projects waiting to happen – huts and tanks to look after, tracks and markers to maintain, re-routes to consider and other projects to improve the Trail for all walkers. Anyone would be most welcome to assist in our ongoing work.

Finally a special thanks to Gavin Campbell who has decided to take a spell from the position of Trail Maintenance Co-ordinator after many years in the position. Gavin is continuing as Section Leader. On behalf of the Friends – thanks Gavin.

New Members

The President and the Council would like to extend a warm welcome to the following 34 members, who have joined the Friends since the last edition of the Trailwalker, and urge them to become involved in the voluntary, walking and social aspects of the association.

Heather Bonson
Christopher Bushell
Coral Campbell
Joan Curnow
Dianne Darley
Jeff Darley
Pauline de Souza
Dharshini Devasagayam
Don Finlayson

Rory Gale
Michael Greenwood
Graham James Harrison
Adrian Horan
Jack Humphrys
Peter Jenkinson
Zhao Jessie Jiaying
Suzanne Mausolf
Jenny McInerney

Trent McInerney
Helen McMaster
Christiane Merz
Rosalind Miles
Melanie Pedretti
Ursula Quinlan
Angela Reimann
Carolyn Ricci
Peter Ricci

Tahlia Ricci
Thomas Ricci
Karen Schand
Carolyn Schultz
Dale Searcy
Greg Smith
Marie Sullivan



Woolundunga Bushfire

Michael Kerin, Section 17A Leader

Most readers will be aware that a fire raged through parts of the Southern Flinders Ranges in January this year. For three nights flames and smoke were visible from my Port Augusta home as I wondered how my section of the Heysen Trail was faring.

The Woolundunga fire began on the afternoon of Wednesday 4 January and continued until the following Saturday morning when a decent amount of rain fell to bring the fire under control. The town of Wilmington had survived a close call. The fire burnt 8298 ha and the final perimeter was 59 km around it.

After allowing two weeks for things to settle down, permission was gained from affected property owners, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Mt Remarkable Council to drive/walk the Heysen Trail within the fire zone to ascertain how much damage was done.

The section in question is Section 17A, Northern Guidebook Map 3.5 (from Horrocks Memorial at 221845) plus all of Map 3.6 plus Map 3.7 as far as 205977 near the southern base of Mt Brown.

With a forecast of 33 degrees we set off early on Saturday 21 January not knowing what we would find. It was hard to put into words the view of bare black/brown hills surrounding us. Trees burnt to various degrees were also numerous. Perhaps the best description is the eeriness of the scene that we were confronted by. The smell of smoke was still present and the occasional big gum tree was still smoking away.

Perhaps most surprising were the tinges of green as some plants were already reshooting.

Enough of the guided tour! The overall survival of the Heysen Trail posts and signage was surprisingly quite high with 80% still standing untouched. Some others



were still standing but very, very black! Others had the plastic stickers melted to them whilst a few had completely turned to ash.

The survival of the fence stiles was another matter as almost all were at least partially burnt and in need of replacing.

The job of getting the Trail back in order in time for the start of the walking season is now ahead of us. It is good to know the size of such a job and to know we will have good vehicular access to it.

I would like to thank all the property owners who were very welcoming of our drive/walk through. They are recovering to various degrees of loss but were more than happy to assist us with access and 'inside' information. Michael Wigg (DENR) and Geoff Slee (Mt Remarkable Council) were also able to do this.

Finally thanks to my co-volunteers Neil Finlay and Gary Smyth for accompanying me on the tour which totalled 150km with a brief stop at the Wilmington Hotel after a long, dirty but satisfying day!

Further photos can be found on our Facebook site, or visit <http://on.fb.me/horrocks>



Wilpena Pound Bushfire

Lightning started a bushfire on 22 January in Wilpena Pound. The fire started in very steep and inaccessible terrain near Point Bonney. Extensive water bombing and fire control lines brought the fire under control after 880 ha was burnt.

The fire burnt west of the Heysen Trail, to the rim of the Pound. Asset protection back-burns were conducted closer to the Wilpena Pound Resort and trail, immediately south-west of the Pound Gap.

Position Vacant

Trailwalker Editor

We are seeking someone to fill the voluntary position of Trailwalker editor. The Trailwalker magazine is produced quarterly by the editor, with assistance from others in the Membership and Marketing Committee. The editor will produce the artwork for the quarterly magazine using Adobe InDesign, laying out provided content: arranging article text and photos, advertising and organisation reports into the magazine format. A six-session training course in Adobe InDesign can be provided, and hands-on help with Adobe InDesign and magazine technical specifications is also available.

If you are interested, please discuss with either Jeremy Carter, email jez.d.carter@gmail.com or phone 0412 846 576, or Robert Alcock, email rralco@bigpond.net.au or phone 0419 819 345.

Three Peaks Challenge

From time to time we hear about groups planning activities along or near the Heysen Trail, this is one.



Maranatha Health is challenging people to climb three peaks in the Flinders Ranges on the long weekend of March 10-12, 2012 – St Mary Peak (1171m, 14km return); Rawnsley Bluff (932m, 12.2km return); and Mt Remarkable at Melrose (957m, 12.2km return).

Maranatha Health supports grassroots health services in Uganda.

Visit www.bit.ly/three-peaks for more info.

Burra Branch Activities

Arthur Simpson, Burra Branch Chairman

2011 has been a special year for us, being the twentieth year since this group was formed. Celebration in the form of two walks and a dinner were planned by Rodney, Hugh and Meredith. The attendance by past members and Adelaide walkers contributed to a successful weekend.

While weekday walks have lacked numbers but weekend walks have been well attended, the moon light walk was once again 'the best'. The night was right, the area was great and the history and info presented left us appreciative of Garry and Sally's effort – sorry Jenny, forgot the lovely hot soup.

The weekend at Black Rock Peak was another popular choice with Ken and Co having walked the trail in preparation.

Many thanks to the office bearers, the walk leaders and all the walkers who together make it happen.

Burra Branch Walk Program for 2012

Date	Location
Sunday 15 April	Tothill Range
Saturday 5 May	Full Moon, Cattle Station Road
Sunday 27 May	Paradise (Caroona Creek Conservation Park)
Saturday 9 June to Monday 11 June, Long Weekend	Bimbowrie Conservation Park
Sunday 8 July	Never Never Creek
Saturday 28 July	Spalding
Sunday 19 August	Princess Royal
Saturday 8 September	Alligator Gorge (Mount Remarkable National Park)
Saturday 29 September	Black Rock
Sunday 21 October	Neagle's Rock and Spring Gully Conservation Park

At the time of publication this walk program had only just been planned, so some of the walks are yet to confirmed as land owners' permission needs to be gained.

For further information about these walks contact Hugh Greenhill on 08 8843 8115 or email hugreenh@activ8.net.au



Walking SA Report

Thelma Anderson, Walking Access Committee

Minimal activity has taken place since the final meeting for the organisation held in December, 2011, prior to the Christmas break and following the completion of walking programmes of the various member clubs for 2011.

ARPA Annual Heysen Trail Maintenance Camp

The year 2011 has brought a Changing of the Guard from Ian Poole and Mary Cameron and their team of various members of ARPA Bushwalking Club who, for many years, have made an annual and rewarding pilgrimage to the mid-northern section of the Heysen Trail to ensure the clarity of the route of the Trail throughout this interesting and scenic area. Wide-ranging activities throughout the section have provided a high degree of satisfaction for the many volunteers who have attended the numerous working groups each year. Possibly the most outstanding and memorable experience was the walk along the rugged Creek following a generous winter rainfall requiring the expertise of mountain climbers to negotiate the deep pools and high cliffs situated in close proximity to the Heysen Trail as it wended its way along the top of Alligator Gorge where Dean Killmier, a former Maintenance Leader, had elected to "check" the marking. It is all there! – Mount Remarkable, Melrose, Willowie Forest, Telowie Gorge Conservation Park, Spring Creek, TV Tower, the vast expanse of Wirrabara Forest, on to Crystal Creek and beyond to Georgetown. Milton Turner and Ron Capel will carry on leadership of this vital section of the Heysen Trail.

Mitcham Council Recreational Trail

Council has advised details of plans for a series of multi-use and single use trails through recreational areas within Council boundaries, including Blackwood Hill Reserve and Magpie Gully Creek locations, connecting with existing recreational trails within Sturt Gorge Recreation Park. Council has produced a comprehensive document entitled

Amended Zone 4 Trail Plan, dated October, 2009. It is a comprehensive document covering details of recreational trails available to walkers, horse-riders and cyclists. "Currently, trail use within Zone 4 is predominantly associated with bush walkers, dog walkers, cross country mountain bike riders and on the Tom Roberts Trail, horse riders. In Zone 4 there is also a history of BMX riding and dirt jumping. The Zone 4 Trail Plan aims to protect remnant vegetation by providing a proactive approach to the management of trails and their use." The document contains detailed maps of particular locations. Also available are numbered and named coloured leaflets, e.g. Mitcham Trails Zone 2 Walking and Cycling, colour coded to indicate the type of trail.

The *Amended Zone 4 Trail Plan* can be downloaded from the City of Mitcham website: www.bit.ly/AqAT0p

Mount Lofty Walking Trails

Work has started on restoration of remaining sections of the former Mount Lofty Walking Trails. Volunteers wishing to assist in this programme are urged to contact Walking SA Office (Liz O'Shea) for further details.

Local Government Association. In the latter part of 2011, the Local Government Association conducted a Workshop to identify principles of use for the future management and use of unformed public roads. These principles of use will then be used to guide the development of the checklist and assessment matrix being developed for the project. The report summarises the discussion and comments recorded at the workshop.

In addition to various local government offices a number of Government agencies, including SA Water, Office of Recreation and Sport, National Trust, Local Government Association, also attended. Undeveloped public road reserves will always remain the most adaptable form of access for application as a walking trail and this organisation will continue to ensure their retention in public ownership for this purpose.

Pioneer Women's Trail Run/Walk

Our friends over at the South Australian Road Runners and Walkers Club (SARRC) are holding a run/walk along the Pioneer Women's Trail from Hahndorf to Beaumont House on 6 May. There are 6, 12 or 26 kilometre options.

More information can be found on the SARRC website closer to the date: www.sarrc.asn.au

Where have our members been hiking over summer?

In this collection of stories, we look at where our members have been hiking during the warm summer months.

Sossusvlei, Namib Desert

Ann and Neil Nosworthy

Our trip to Africa was a largely sedentary experience, mostly because for our own safety we were not allowed out of the vehicles. But we did have an opportunity to walk among the amazing sand dunes at Sossusvlei in the Namib Desert, which is in Namibia on the west coast of

Africa. The largest predators in the area are hyenas so it was safe for us to walk around.

We were impressed by the scenery coming into Sossusvlei with rugged, rocky mountains, ravines and gorges interspersed with dry desert valleys. But the sand dunes were truly magnificent. They were massive in size over 200 metres high and the sea of sand extended to the horizon. There was no vegetation on the dunes and only a few scrubby acacia trees and grasses grew around the clay pans between the dunes. The colour of the sand was brilliant, ranging from a bright pink to a soft red first thing in the morning turning to orange in the middle of the day and purple later on. They were so clean with sharp edges and smooth scallops, a classic example of perfection in nature.

...Story Continued on Page 30

Hartz Peak, Tasmania

Andrew and Vicki Cox

One of the most accessible and spectacular walks in Tasmania is Hartz Peak. One of the 60 Great Short Walks in Tasmania, this was one of the highlights of a recent trip.

The walk is classified as moderate – Hartz Pass being 3.5 hours return and, if attempting Hartz Peak, 5 hours return. With good weather and a reasonable level of fitness, 2.5 -3 hours would be more accurate, even allowing for side-trips to explore Lake Esperance and Ladies Tarn.

We were fortunate with fine weather, the forecast 23°C eventuating. Signs display warnings that blizzard weather conditions can occur with little warning in any month and that all walkers must be equipped with suitable clothing and require navigation skills.

...Story Continued on Page 30

Piz Bernina, Switzerland

John Hillard

The circuit of the Piz Bernina massif in south east Switzerland takes a week and includes spectacular mountain scenery, lakes and a series of steep climbs and descents over (sometimes snow covered) passes up to 2700 metres. There are plenty of people walking in the valleys in early October but very few when you start climbing. I ended up doing only five days as I had to modify the route when a metre of snow fell the day before I arrived. Accommodation was in old, but comfortable, Swiss and Italian Alpine Club huts where you can get a good meal and a glass of wine at quite reasonable prices. You need to carry your own food and equipment (including sleeping bag and bivvy bag) in case the weather turns.



Cliffs, Victor Harbor

Robert Alcock

5

It's always such a wonderful walk along the Waitpinga Cliffs with a cooling breeze flowing up the cliffs, even on a bright summers day. With the cliffs dropping to a rocky coast, we walked on the rocky path, through patches of coastal scrub. We enjoyed lunch at the Peter Hill memorial picnic table, with vistas



back to The Bluff, before returning along the cliffs. The south coast, from Horseshoe Bay to Waitpinga cliffs, make for a wonderful summer's weekend out.

Queen Charlotte Track, NZ

Jerry Foster and Amara Foster

4

We tramped New Zealand's Queen Charlotte Track in November. It was a great walk, and the perfect weather meant spectacular views the whole way.

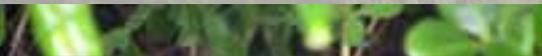


Photo by Les Orme

Bicheno Foreshore, Tasmania

David Rattray

6

Bicheno is a fishing and holiday village on Tasmania's east coast. It boasts a three kilometre foreshore walk starting at Rice Pebble Beach in the south. Walking north you pass the Blowhole which can be spectacular at high water, then if you want a short climb, you can detour to Whalers Lookout with its two lookouts – the west one looks over the town and from the east one you may see migrating whales. Returning to the foreshore you walk past and along the Gultch and hear the nesting seabirds on Governor Island then past the White Dog Café and its excellent coffee. If you are lucky you may see some Little (Fairy) Penguins. The walk continues past Waubs Beach and the Sealife Centre from which the nightly Penguin tours are run. The foreshore footway ends at the southern end of Redbill Beach, however at low water it is possible to walk across to Diamond Island.

Appalachian Trail, West Virginia

Jo Chesher

7

There were three walking highlights for Ian Small and me over the summer. The first was climbing Taos Mountain in New Mexico – a sacred mountain with stunning scenery and a community of tiny Chipmunks to keep us amused. Second was walking on the Appalachian Trail near Harpers Ferry in West Virginia and then another section in Shenandoah National Park in Virginia - that's me on the right looking out for bears. We visited the Appalachian Trail office in Harpers Ferry where they have an impressive 3D model of the complete Trail and where we came across a young man who was halfway through walking the 3488 km trail 'end to end' solo and in one go – very inspiring.



The other walking highlight of the summer was joining Julian Monfries and his crew in Chepstow and walking three days of the Offas Dyke trail along the Welsh/English border. Well – Ian walked for three days – I took the second day off to go sight-seeing with Sue in Monmouth, where we were sprung by the walkers as they passed through the main street while we were taking it easy in the sunshine outside a local cafe.





Photo by Les Orme

Blue Mountains, NSW

Elfi Driscoll and Rose Wallington

9

It's early December and two friends decide to do a bit of walking in Sydney. One would expect the temperature to be warm so light clothing has been taken. However, arriving in Katoomba it rains and the barometer registers barely 15 degrees at midday.

A quick stop at the op shop for some fleece to keep out the cold and off we are to Echo Point following the instructions of walk 31 in George Driscoll's *The Best 50 Bushwalks around Sydney*.

The walk goes down The Giant Stairways past the famous Three Sisters and to the Leura Forest before returning via the Scenic Railway back to the start. The scenery, the moist air and lush vegetation are magnificent. We managed to complete the walk within 3 hours in order to catch the last rail carriage up. What a great start!

Day 2 As it had rained all night and promised to keep doing so we decided on a visit to Blackheath. Trudging along the streets in pouring rain we made it to Gavett's Leap Look Out. The view – only white rain clouds – well, we could use our imagination! We entertained ourselves in Blackheath's fabulous Antique market and visited one or two galleries instead.

Day 3 The weather god took pity on us and provided us with the perfect walking conditions. We chose Wentworth Falls via the Federal Pass and ending with Darwin's walk. It was stunning – the waterfalls, the sounds and smells of the rainforest, the fantastic views and sheer grandeur of the track – one of the best walks to experience.

I will go back for more.



Walls of Jerusalem Walk

David Rattray

8

Gerry, Les and I had a day to discover the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. The sign near the carpark says it's a three to four hour walk climbing 1200 metres to Wild Dog Creek campsite. Yes, it was hard work but the scenery once we reached the plateau was well worth it. We hiked for over an hour through Harrod's Gate, past King David's Peak, Lake Salome, Vale of Bethsheda, Pool of Bethsheda to the end of the West Wall at Damascus Gate before turning around – our allotted four hours was up. We lunched at one of the hardened tent sites at Wild Dog Creek before beginning the knee punishing decent back to the car. A very spectacular place our only regret was that we should have allocated more time for the walk.

Great South West Walk

Jeremy Carter

10



Four days walking along spectacular coastal cliffs and beaches, followed by three days through forest. Great shelters and campsites, well maintained trail. Everyone was so friendly, even cafe staff asked if we wanted to refill our water.

Mountain Gorillas, Rwanda

Ann and Neil Nosworthy

11

Charles is a 200 kg silverback, the dominant male of the Umubano group of mountain gorillas in Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda. There are only about 800 mountain gorillas left in the wild. They live in dense rainforest in a mountainous region on the borders of Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We had chosen to make our gorilla trek in Rwanda because it was near to Arusha in Tanzania where we had an amazing safari to the Serengeti Plains.

...Story Continued on Page 30



Walks

	February	March		April	May	June	July	August
1st Week of month	Wed Feb 1 Twilight Walk Marino Robyn Quinn	Wed Mar 7 Twilight Walk North Adelaide Michael Middleton	Trail Starter Trail Walker End-to-End	Sun Apr 1 Walk Season Opening	Sun May 6 Trailstarter Carrick Hill Richard Milosh Sun May 6 Trailwalker Chambers Gully Jack Marcelis Sun May 6 End-to-End 5 Cudlee Creek to Mewett Road	Sun June 3 Trailstarter Marys Gully Arrienne Wynen Sun June 3 Trailwalker Yurrebilla Trail Part 1 John Potter Sun June 3 End-to-End 5 Mewett Road to Mt Crawford	Sun Jul 1 Trailstarter Ghost Gum Black Hill Steve Clift Sun Jul 1 Trailwalker Yurrebilla Trail Part 2 David Carter Sun Jul 1 End-to-End 5 Mt Crawford to Pewsey Vale	Sun Aug 1 Trailstarter Chamber Gully Neil R Sun Aug 1 Trailwalker Yurrebilla Trail Michael M Sun Aug 1 End-to-End 5 Pewsey to Tan
2nd Week of month	Wed Feb 8 Twilight Walk Morialta David Carter	Wed Mar 14 Twilight Walk Chamber Gully Arrienne Wynen	Trail Starter Trail Walker End-to-End	Easter	Mother's Day Sun May 13 Trailstarter Sleep Gully Chris Porter Sun May 13 Trailwalker Onkaparinga Simon Cameron Sat May 12 - Sun May 13 End-to-End 4 Peters Hill to Gerkie Gap to Webb Gap	June Long Weekend Sun June 10 Trailstarter Sturt Gorge Robyn Quinn Sat Jun 9 - Sun 10 - Mon 11 Ex End-to-End 3 Patawerta Sat Jun 9 - Sun 10 - Mon 11 End-to-End 4 Webb Gap to Old Burra Road to Worlds End Sun 10 SARRC 15/32km walk/run Sea-to-Summit	Sun Jul 8 Trailstarter Port Adelaide Richard Milosh Sun Jul 8 Trailwalker Horsnell Gully to Mt Lofty Colin Edwards Sat Jul 7 - Sun Jul 8 End-to-End 4 Burra to Wandallah to Newkirk Creek	Sun Aug 1 Trailstarter Girl's C Arrienne Sun Aug 1 Trailwalker Gandys Richard Sat Aug 11 - Sun Aug 12 End-to-End 4 Newkirk Cr Bryan East
3rd Week of month	Wed Feb 15 Twilight Walk Torrens Linear Park West Lyn Wood		Trail Starter Trail Walker End-to-End	Sun Apr 15 Trailstarter Ashbourne Dean Mortimer Sun Apr 15 Trailwalker Mt Thomas Steve Clift Sun Apr 15 End-to-End 5 Montacute Heights to Cudlee Creek	Sat May 19 Walk Leaders' Training Day Arrienne Wynen Sun May 20 Trailstarter Bridgewater/Mt George Graham Bald Sun May 20 Trailwalker Black Hill/Morialta Michael Middleton Sun May 20 End-to-End 6 Mt Compass to Kyeema	Sun June 17 Trailstarter Kuitpo Michael Middleton Sun June 17 Trailwalker Kuitpo Russell O'Brien Sun June 17 End-to-End 6 Kyeema to Dashwood Gully Road	Sun Jul 15 Trailstarter Brownhill/Waite Reserve Graham Bald Sun Jul 15 Trailwalker Sea-to-Summit: 1/2 or Full Bob Gentle / Jack Marcelis Sun Jul 15 End-to-End 6 Dashwood Gully Road to Mylor	Sun Aug 1 Trailstarter Mylor Nat Graham Sun Aug 1 Trailwalker TB TB Sun Aug 1 End-to-End 6 Mylor Cleland
4th Week of month	Wed Feb 22 Twilight Walk Brighton to Kingston Pk Carol Homewood		Trail Starter Trail Walker End-to-End	Sun Apr 22 Trailstarter Mount Lofty David Carter Sun Apr 22 Trailwalker Onkaparinga Richard Milosh Sun Apr 22 End-to-End 6 James Track to Mt Compass	Sun May 27 Trailstarter Scott Creek Bob Gentle Sun May 27 Trailwalker Eastern Foothills Richard Milosh Sun May 27 End-to-End 7 Cobbler Hill to Tapanappa	Sun June 24 Trailstarter Summertown Rhonda Dempster Sun June 24 Trailwalker Chambers Gully Richard Milosh Sun June 24 End-to-End 7 Tapanappa to Balquhider	Sun Jul 22 Trailstarter Strathalbyn Jerry Foster Sun Jul 22 Trailwalker Sea-to-Summit: 2nd 1/2 Bob Gentle Sun Jul 22 End-to-End 7 Balquhider to Waitpinga	Sun Aug 1 Trailstarter TB Gavin Ca Sun Aug 1 Trailwalker Kuitpo Lucy Ric Sun Aug 1 End-to-End 7 Waitp to Tugwe
5th Week of month	Wed Feb 29 Twilight Walk Special Leaping Walk - East Parklands Simon Cameron		Trail Starter Trail Walker End-to-End	Sun Apr 29 Trailstarter Cudlee Creek Raelene Shaw Sun Apr 29 Trailwalker Warren CP Robyn Quinn Sun Apr 29 End-to-End 7 Cape Jervis to Cobbler Hill	Key to Walk Programme Trail Starter walk Trail Walker walk End-to-End walk Other walk event An explanation of walk grades and details for each walk event are published on the website	Sun Jul 29 Trailstarter Norton Summit Raelene Shaw Sun Jul 29 Trailwalker TBA - somewhere new! David Carter	Sat Jul 21 - Sun Aug 12 Trip Away - Larapinta Trail	

Walk Grades

There are five different grades of walk on the Friends of the Heysen Trail walk programme. Four of these operate during the walk season, generally from April to November when it is not Fire Ban Season:

- Trail Starter
- Trail Walker
- Trail Rambler
- End-to-End

When it is not walk season, generally during the summer Fire Ban Season, a fifth walk grade, Summer Twilight Walks, operate.

Details of each walk grade are provided on the website: www.heysentrail.asn.au/walks

Walk Registration

You must register for a walk, either online or over the phone.

Register online at www.heysentrail.asn.au, or by phoning the office on 8212 6299 (during the hours listed on page 3.) Walks close between Tuesday and Friday prior to the walk, closing dates and times are listed on each walk event page on the website.

August	September	October	November
Aug 5 Trailstarter McLaren Gully Rhonda Dimpster	Sun Sept 2 Trailstarter McLaren Vale Rhonda Dimpster	Sun Oct 7 Trailstarter Scott Creek - other end David Carter	
Aug 5 Trailwalker Trail Part 3 Middleton	Sun Sept 2 Trailwalker Yurrebilla Trail Part 4 Mary Cartland	Sun Oct 7 Trailwalker Kaiser Stuhl John Potter	
Aug 5 End to End 5 Vale Tunda	Sun Sept 2 End-to-End 5 Tanunda to Kapunda	Sat Oct 6 - Sun Oct 7 End-to-End 5 Kapunda to Hamilton to Peters Hill	Sat Nov 3 - Sun Nov 4 End-to-End 5 Peters Hill to Gerkie Gap to Webb Gap
Aug 12 Trailstarter Choice Wynen	Sun Sept 9 Trailstarter Mt Lofty/Botanic Gdns Circuit Graham Bald	Sun Oct 14 Trailstarter Coromandel Valley Chris Porter	
Aug 12 Trailwalker Gully Milosh	Sun Sept 9 Trailwalker Vixens / Devils Gully Mary Cartland	Sun Oct 14 Trailwalker Near Mt Gould Mary Cartland	
Sun Aug 12 End 4 Week to Mt to Hallett	Sat Sept 8 - Sun Sept 9 End-to-End 4 Hallett to EE George Road to Burra Road	Sat Oct 13 - Sun Oct 14 End-to-End 4 Burra Road to Dundaleer Reservoir to Curnows Hut	Sat Nov 10 - Sun Nov 11 End-to-End 4 Curnows Hut to Raeville to Locks Ruin
Aug 19 Trailstarter Pure Trail Bald	Sun Sept 16 Trailstarter TBA - a great surprise Peter Solomon	Sun Oct 21 Trailstarter TBA Gavin Campbell	
Aug 19 Trailwalker A	Sun Sept 16 Trailwalker Parra Wirra John Potter	Sun Oct 21 Trailwalker TBA	
Aug 19 End 6 r to d CP	Sun Sept 16 End-to-End 6 Cleland CP to Montacute Heights	Sun Oct 21 End-to-End 6 Montacute Heights to Cudlee Creek	
Aug 26 Trailstarter A Campbell	Sun Sept 23 Trailstarter Para Wirra - Wild Flowers David Carter	Sun Oct 28 Trailstarter TBA	
Aug 26 Trailwalker po chards	Sun Sept 23 Trailwalker Eagle on the Hill Simon Cameron	Sun Oct 28 Trailwalker TBA	
Aug 26 End 7 inga ill Road	Sun Sept 23 End-to-End 7 Tugwell Road to Inman Valley	Sun Oct 28 End-to-End 7 Inman Valley to James Track	
	Sun Sept 30 Trailstarter TBA Gavin Campbell		
	Sun Sept 30 Trailwalker TBA - north Robert Alcock		
	Sat Sept 29 - Mon Oct 1 Extended Trip TBA		



**The Friends of
the Heysen Trail**
10 Pitt Street Adelaide 5000
Phone 08 8212 6299
www.heysentrail.asn.au

This version released 4 Feb 2012

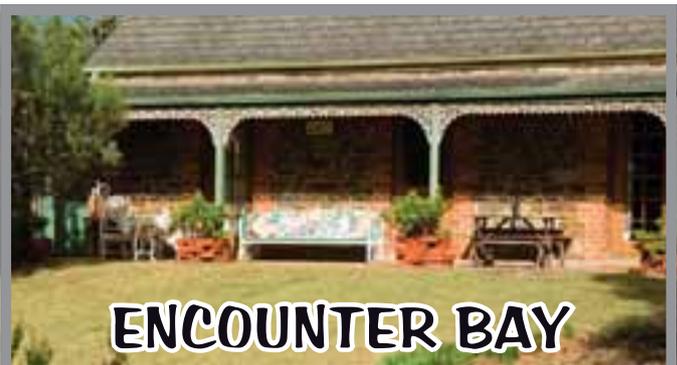
Walk Cancellations

Walks are cancelled if the forecast is over 32°C. **This doesn't apply to Summer Twilight Walks.**

If unforeseen circumstances arise and you are no longer able to participate in the walk, please notify the office as soon as possible, or leave a message on the answering machine after this time.

Further Information

Further information about each walk, what to wear and what to bring, walk grades, frequently asked questions or to print off a colour copy of the programme, visit www.heysentrail.asn.au/walks



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Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 25th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Heysen Trail and Other Walking Trails Inc will be held at 7.30pm on Friday, 23rd March 2012 at Woodville Lawn Bowling Club, Oval Avenue, Woodville South. Free car parking will be available in the car park; enter from Koolunda Avenue.

The agenda for this meeting is printed to the right.

Nominations are sought from you, our members, for election to the Friends Council at the Annual General Meeting, for all positions excluding the President, viz. Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and half of the remaining members (our Constitution calls for not less than four and not more than ten non office bearing members.)

Council meetings are currently held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5.30pm, in a room provided by Uniting Care Wesley (above the Friends offices). Meetings usually conclude by 7.30pm.

In addition to Council, there is an opportunity for members to contribute to one of the various Committees: Walking, Trails Maintenance, Marketing and Membership, Trailwalker.

To nominate, please complete and copy or detach the form below and send it to:

The Secretary
Friends of the Heysen Trail
10 Pitt Street Adelaide, 5000

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Acceptance of the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 25 March 2011
3. President's Report
4. Financial Report
5. Maintenance Report
6. Election of Officers
 - 6.1 Vice President
 - 6.2 Treasurer
 - 6.3 Secretary
 - 6.4 Council Members
7. Appointment of Auditor
8. Election of Honorary Members
9. Other Business
 - 9.1 Setting of annual subscriptions
Recommendation from the outgoing Council "that the membership fees be increased by \$5 for individuals and \$10 for families and organizations. Junior fee and joining fees to remain unchanged."
 - 9.2 Any other business
10. Close of Meeting

At the conclusion of the business of the evening, we have invited Chris Halstead from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to address the meeting.

Tea and coffee will be served at the conclusion of the evening. Please bring a plate of light supper.

Note: Any member wishing to move a motion at the AGM should be aware of the Constitutional requirements as follows: "Notice of any motion proposed to be moved at a General Meeting by any member not being a member of the Council shall be signed by the proposer and seconder and shall be delivered to the Secretary at least seven days before the meeting. No motion moved by any member other than a member of the Council shall be entertained by the meeting unless notice thereof has been given as aforesaid."

Nomination Form

I wish to nominate for the position of
Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Council Member

.....
[Signature of Nominee] [Proposer]

.....
[Please Print Name] [Secunder]

Nominations close at 2.00pm on Friday 16th March 2012 at the Friends office

Note: We welcome nominations for Council, particularly from new members. The section of the Friends Constitution relevant to nomination and election to the Council is reproduced on the opposite page.



Election of Council Members at AGM

The Section of the Friends Constitution relating to Management of the Association, and to the procedure for nomination and election of members of the Council is reproduced below.

8. Management

- (1) The affairs of the Association shall be managed and controlled by a Council which may exercise on behalf of the Association all the powers conferred on the Association by this Constitution, and may do all such things as are within the objects of the Association except such things as are required to be done by the Association in General Meeting.
- (2) The Council shall consist of the President of the Association, together with a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and not less than four, nor more than ten other members, all of whom shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting of the Association.
- (3) The President shall hold office for a period of two years and shall be eligible for reelection after that period, provided that after three terms in office he or she shall stand down for at least one year.
- (4) The Vice-President, the Secretary, the Treasurer and half of the other members shall retire annually. The members to retire each year shall be determined by

the Council which shall ensure, as far as possible, that they shall retire in rotation. A retiring Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer or member shall be eligible for re-election without nomination.

- (5) Nominations for election as President, Vice-President, Secretary or Treasurer, or as a member of the Council shall be invited by notice in the Association's Newsletter or other appropriate publication not less than 21 days before the Annual General Meeting. All persons nominated for election must be members of the Association.
- (6) Nominations must be in writing and must be signed by two members of the Association and by the nominee to signify his willingness to stand for election.

They must include brief biographical details of the nominee for distribution to members at or before the Annual General Meeting and must reach the Secretary of the Association not less than seven days before the Annual General Meeting; provided that if an insufficient number of nominations has been received to fill the vacancies, additional nominations may be accepted at the Annual General Meeting.

- (7) If the number of nominations received is more than the number of vacancies to be filled, an election to fill the vacancies shall be held by secret ballot. ■

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Somewhere Over the Rainbow

A classic 12 day tramp in
New Zealand's South Island

Alan Davis

The minibus driver bringing us from the airport into Nelson City, at the top of New Zealand's South Island, was at great pains to point out the damage caused by recent heavy rains. Though I didn't quite share his obvious glee that many of the multimillion dollar houses that had been declared uninhabitable belonged to rich out-of-towners, it was disturbing that more rain was predicted – especially as the trip I had planned in the nearby Nelson Lakes area was to be spent, to a large degree, above the treeline.

But there was no thought of delaying the start of my walk based on a weather forecast, so late afternoon I was knocking off the 12kms into Connors Creek Hut which constituted Day 1.

I've stayed here several times before in years past and have always had the place to myself, so it was a bit perturbing to find the hut overrun by a particularly raucous species of local fauna, four senior female trampers. These old chooks, as I was soon calling them, certainly knew how to enjoy themselves, but as we laughed and joked the evening away, I soon discovered they took their tramping very seriously. Now retired, they had plenty of time to get away and enjoy their love of walking. Not the "easy peasy" stuff as they described the Great Walks, but toughies like the Dusky Track, the Demon Trail and others I knew with fearsome reputations. I left them still happily cackling away next morning.

I spied a little raised grassy area just big enough for a tent. This, as it turned out, was probably the only spot in the whole valley where camping was possible.

Connors Creek is one of a number of lovely valleys that form the Rainbow Conservation Area, which lies east of the St Arnaud Range and Nelson Lakes NP. For some unexplained reason, this region has escaped the serious attention of the local tramping fraternity. True, there's little in the way of marked routes or huts and you have to work for your enjoyment but this is usually seen as a part of the attraction.

Rather surprisingly then, there is a reasonably good track up the Connors through the beech forest, which sticks close to the river. It peters out at the treeline and it's then just the simple matter of following the creek up towards the head of the valley. It's so often the case in New Zealand that as rivers rise they eventually flow through a gorge



or drop as a waterfall and the Connors is no different. I eventually had to climb steep tussock slopes well above the creek which gradually levelled out for the final push onto the pass overlooking the Begley Valley. This is a low point on the ridge line south of Mt. Chittenden and the great views made the 1100metre climb up from the hut more than worth it. The drop off presented no problems (spotted a pair of Chamois on the descent) but the toughest part of the day was shortly ahead, following the heavily forested side stream down to the valley floor. Just before 5pm I finally emerged from the forest onto a track that led into Begley Hut, but despite the temptation to spend the night here, I decided to push on. About 2.5 hours downstream the Begley flows into the Rainbow, both creeks have to be forded and with the threat of rain I wanted to get all my river crossings done whilst the going was good. Camp for the night was in a little clump of forest on the Rainbow Flats, about 30 minutes upstream from the confluence, after a long 12 hour day.

As the Rainbow River makes its way into the mountains it eventually divides into 2 branches. The more northerly leads to Rainbow Pass, a reputed difficult crossing over and down onto the Travers Sabine Circuit. My route however was up the south branch where I hoped to find a pass at the head of the valley giving access into the East Sabine. I've never seen a valley quite like this anywhere in New Zealand, it's basically one giant avalanche chute. About a kilometre above the forks the stream completely disappears and it's then just a river of rocks all the way up to the valley head. The steeply sided hills are covered with vast screes, the whole landscape dotted with huge boulders. There are few side streams as any runoff from the mountains soon disappears under the rocky riverbed and camping spots, given the topography, virtually nonexistent. This was a major worry because Murphy's Law being what it is, about noon the long predicted rain finally made its appearance. An hour later it was getting a lot heavier, but just in the nick of time I spied a little raised grassy area just big enough for a tent.





Rainbow River, below the forks

This, as it turned out, was probably the only spot in the whole valley where camping was possible. For the next 43 hours I was to be cocooned away here in this remote corner of the South Rainbow as the rain hammered down day and night.

I'm sure there's a medical term (Simon, Julian, Greg?) that describes the mental ennui that sets in when you spend hour after hour lying marooned in your tent like this. Having looked at my maps so many times I'd fall asleep dreaming of converging contour lines. Even the rumble and crash of great boulders as they tumbled down the mountains which initially had me leaping out of the tent, all seemed so ho hum after a while. But being an eternal optimist I kept myself cheery knowing the weather would eventually turn. Then, somewhere, over the Rainbow, I'd find those longed for blue skies.

About 10pm on the second evening, the rain gradually began to ease but a peep out of the tent at first light showed the valley now completely immersed in heavy cloud. I've been told that all the mountain craft books say in the situation of a whiteout to stay put (which is why I've never bothered to read them). Having been moribund for nearly two days I just wanted to get moving again so after packing, it was up to the gloomy valley head to see what would eventuate. There was no hope of spotting the pass under these conditions but by taking a compass bearing, I worked out it had to be... "there"... (pointing with my finger into the murk). By following up

snow drifts in the rock gut, I eventually made it to the summit, my altimeter spot on at 2050 metres. If anything however, conditions were even worse in the East Sabine and dropping off the pass was like descending into darkness. There's no substitute for experience in a situation like this (aided by about 99% luck) and somehow I made it to the valley floor before setting up camp on a lovely little raised snowgrass embankment above the river. What would the morning bring?

"Improved conditions but cloudy on the tops"... there are basically two options once in the East Sabine. Follow the river downstream until it meets up with the Travers Sabine Circuit (a tough gig as there is no track through the forest) or cross a pass on the ridgeline below Mt Belvedere before descending into the Clarence. The latter was my preferred route so it was the long climb up steep tussock and snowgrass slopes onto a ledge that gave easy access to the pass. With the cloud having lifted, views from the summit were superb and this is definitely one of the best vantage points in the whole Nelson Lakes region. The Clarence is a lovely valley offering easy walking along broad river flats, but I've travelled this route before and thus with no impetus to linger, I made the decision not to stop for the night until making it to the Waiau River. In the event I pulled up stumps about 10 minutes short pitching camp by a little side stream in a meadow of wild flowers, the time 8.40pm. It had been a long and satisfying day and I slept well.

The Waiau Valley is now part of the St James Conservation Area and the lower reaches of the river have gradually been opened up for recreational use. Mountain bikers, horse trekkers and fly fishermen are all using the old farm tracks, and rightly so, since the taxpayer had to pay umpteen million dollars to return the land to public ownership. But the upper reaches of the river were never developed to any extent and there's much lovely country here, so hopefully the Department of Conservation will let it remain as a haven for walkers. The hillsides which are heavily forested give way to broad river flats until further up, on reaching the treeline, the valley contracts and then climbs through tussocks and rock debris. A poled route leads onto a steep ridgeline towards the Waiau Pass, the most used alpine crossing by those doing north south traverses from St Arnaud to Lewis Pass. Very few though continue right up to the remote valley head unless doing trips over into the D'urville or East Matakotiki, and thus they miss out on one of the real jewels in the whole Nelson Lakes area, Lake Thompson. I've been here before and I'll certainly come again. It's a classic little alpine lake, surrounded on three sides by mountains at an elevation of about 1700 metres. I was surprised then whilst walking around the rocky shoreline to hear a voice calling out. A young couple were sheltering behind a huge boulder having dinner and going over to say hello I decided to camp next to them. They had just crossed over the Waiau Pass from Blue Lake and were taking the same route as me the following day over into the East Matakotiki so the decision then to join forces was a no brainer given the reputation this trip has. We went off to bed having agreed on a 7am rise for an 8 o'clock start.

Well the journey from the lake, over Thompson Pass then around and down into the East Matakotiki could easily be a story on its own. It suffices to say, we made it, but in far from ideal conditions to say the least. The two passes that have to be crossed on the way present few difficulties but it's the high valley traverse between them that is the problem. With poor visibility, navigation wasn't easy and it was only a lucky break in the weather at one stage that allowed us to spot the Upper D'urville Pass. Nic and Rowan were terrific, confident on the



East Matakotiki Hut

steep slopes and with excellent route finding skills. They could easily out walk me also but I kept chiding them that no matter how many times you read Aesop's fable "the Hare and the Tortoise", the winner always remains the same. Given the weather I might not have attempted the trip on my own so having their cheerful company was a decided bonus.

Dropping off the Upper D'urville Pass down into the East Matakotiki one of my knees, unfortunately, decided to develop the yips. Both are arthritic to varying degrees but until now had performed magnificently. However an accidental hyper extension to the right one on the descent had bought instant pain and on reaching the valley floor, I'd been reduced to a hobble. I knew there was no chance of getting to East Matakotiki Hut by nightfall, so Nic and Rowan set off at a pace whilst I struggled on with my newly developed silly walk, eventually setting up camp at 9.15pm in a tiny clearing in the forest just a couple of metres above the river. Early next morning I was knocking at the door of the hut to wake my young friends who had decided to have a rest day.

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Returning here after a hiatus of seven years reconfirmed the opinion this is my favourite hut in all New Zealand. It's not just the location, a little clearing in the forest just above the river, or the fabulous views to the mountains at the head of the valley, but more the sheer effort to get here and the stunning country you have to pass through on the way that makes it special. This made it more painful when just before noon I had to farewell Nic and Rowan before heading off for Bob's Hut. Thankfully, there is a track between the two huts because it would be a brute of a trip otherwise. The river is crossed at one point via one of New Zealand's infamous three wire bridges, certainly not for the faint hearted. Bobs is another classic backcountry hut and I was sorely tempted to spend the night here but with my knee still causing me grief, pushing on whilst the weather was good became the priority. The West Matakita River has to be crossed near the hut then a rough track sidles up into the forest before dropping back down to the river. It gives out at a point where you have to wade upstream to access a huge river flat and making it here by 8.30pm was a real psychological boost. It's a beaut spot to camp and I set up my tent in high spirits.

Thus to Day 10, perhaps the most unforgettable of the whole trip. The West Matakita is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful valleys in the whole Nelson Lakes area. Combine it with perfect weather, time to follow the river slowly upstream, a breathtaking 360 degree panorama of mountains on continuous view and the

forest having been left far behind, well, what more could one ask for? But be prepared to be blown away at the valley head when it finally appears. Three gorgeous little tarns lie in a basin right at the foot of the Spencer Range. It would be hard to imagine a lovelier spot and if it had been later in the day, I would have camped here but with the weather still brilliant, it made sense to get the final pass of the trip out of the way. To cross from the West Matakita over into the Maruia Valley, you have to climb the aptly named Three Tarns Pass. (It's not actually a pass at all but just a low point on the ridgeline that gives easy access between the two valleys.) Dropping down into the Maruia, about a 300 metres below, is a little tarn basin and I immediately decided to camp the night. Pitching my tent on a grassy area about a metre or so from the smaller of the two tarns, on an embankment overlooking the mountains, with plenty of late afternoon sun allowing me to wash and dry my under things for the first time in 10 days (and the grubby thing inside them), this was perhaps the highlight of the whole trip.



Alan on Clarence Pass

Spanish Adventures

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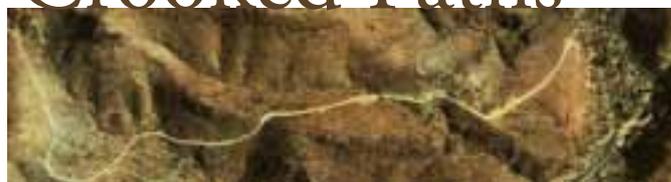
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The final two days are really just a postscript to this story. With the weather now at its best, there was no incentive to hasten to the finish line. The Maruia Valley is quite a lovely place but there's plenty of work still to do following the river downstream. Early afternoon, emerging from the forest onto a tussock flat, shortly after I came to a bridge, which meant one thing – the St James Walkway. Minutes later I arrived at Ada Pass Hut, which for most doing the St James is the first night's stop. The hut has been sited perfectly to overlook the mountains and I set up camp on a grassy verge by a little stream that flows past the front. An hour or so later a mother and son doing the Walkway joined me, followed

shortly after by Nic and Rowan who had camped the previous night in the West Matakitaiki. Next morning it was just the last few pleasant hours following the well marked track down to SH7 and Lewis Pass.

This is a brilliant trip passing through some of the most beautiful and accessible mountain country in all New Zealand. It is challenging at times and requires good route finding skills as none of the upper valleys or passes are marked in any way. Knowing how to read maps and use a compass is also essential. It's often said that the best things in life are free. In the case of this walk, not quite so. It cost me five dollars, the price of one hut ticket for my night at Connors Creek! ■



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Bookings Essential

Falls Creek with ARPA

Julian Monfries

It was one of those serendipitous emails that caught my eye pertaining a week away in the Snowy Mountains after the New Year with ARPA. I had been unable to do the Friends Snowy Mountains week in November, so this seemed like an ideal opportunity to make up for it.

The walks were based around Falls Creek using one of the Schuss Ski Club lodges and mostly on the Bogong High Plains.

So there I was at 6.00pm, in the Schuss at Falls Creek, having driven for 11 hours from Adelaide. I must say the greetings were rather subdued, I had missed the crucial briefing, and most had had dinner and a couple of wines and were slipping into the mellow interlude between food, drink and sleep. I have not been on a camp with ARPA previously and I must say if this is camping then bring it on. A room to myself with ensuite, fully equipped kitchen with dishwasher (that turned out to be me), games room and TV room, even a sauna!

A delightful walk through alpine rainforest, and the meeting of four snakes along the way.

At this camp ARPA were doing two levels of walk, A and B. The A walk is usually harder and longer, both in time and distance, than the B walk. I would do the A walk, as would the others from the Friends, Eve Buckley, Hilary Dickman, Cliff Walsh and Malcolm Slade. Be ready by eight was the word, and that set the pattern for the week, with us all assembled often in the freezing cold, ready to head off.

Our first walk was Mount McKay, a daunting 1800 metre peak at the back of Falls Creek. It had almost the whole variety of weather that could be thrown at us. Sunny and warm as we climbed from Howmans Gap, to light rain, to a howling gale with rain as we summited. Luckily, a small walker's hut (for walkers of any size?) provided us with shelter for morning tea, then into the blizzard, which just died away as we descended, to be replaced by an all-enveloping mist, that made navigation difficult to say the least. Further refuge was taken in Lorna Dunkley hut, with lunch until the mist departed revealing our route. The sun then reappeared and there was a rapid peeling of gear followed by a steamy descent off Frying Pan Spur back to the cars.



Fitzgerald Hut

The next day had us taking a 40 km drive to Shannonvale, to start what I called the Kelly Hut Track and walk back toward Falls Creek, to our cars at Watchbed Creek, an initial steady climb of about 1000 metres. Our plans were interrupted by coming across a bicycle rider who had taken a fall, and needed taking back to the resort.

Our longest day, a 23km monster, involved the Mt McArthur fire track, a delightful walk through alpine rainforest and the meeting of four snakes along the way. The walk started at Howmans Gap and finished at Bogong Village. The B's I might add had a horrific 600 metre straight up start to their version of this walk.

Then came the Mount Cope walk, utilising the Langford Aqueduct, another ascent, some bush bashing, some Australian Alpine Walking Trail and fire tracks.

Our rest day coincided with the weather forecast for rain. We were not to be let down, as 60 mm poured into Falls Creek on the Sunday, confining all but the bravest to barracks for the day. Luckily, the grog supplies held out.

Our last two days involved more mountains and huts, even some wild brumbies, with both Mount Nelse and Mount Jim summited and Edmondson and Johnstons Huts both visited to end a great week of walking.

The week finished with the long drive back to reality and Adelaide.

You've got to hand it to ARPA, they do a good camp! ■

Read the full story, with photos at <http://arpafalls creek2012.blogspot.com/>

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Social Page

Australia Day at Kingston Park

A group of eight walked the sand to Brighton and return, by which time a good group of Friends' had gathered to meet-up, chat and enjoy an Aussie BBQ.

The lengthening shadows shaded our group of 30 plus. Cooking was done in the cool of the evening, and we enjoyed a delightful twilight. It was good to catch-up with friends old and new.

26 Jan



Boxing Day Walk

A number of the Friends purged the excesses of Christmas with a walk.

An annual event for nearly 20 years, a walk in Montacute, from the Sixth Creek ford, up one of the steepest and longest ridgelines, would be the most appropriate method to expunge those excesses, followed up – to undo all that hard work – the demolition of Christmas left-overs, finishing off a pleasant, albeit hard, walk.

26 Dec



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Christmas Party

Members celebrated the end of the year with an evening of lawn bowling.

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Story Continued from Page 13...

Sossusvlei, Namib Desert

We only went for a short 5km walk over some of the dunes and this was sufficient on a sunny 30°C day. Our first dune gave us a picture of the vast sea of sand and the first chance to enjoy descending the face of the dunes. It took a few steps before we got the rhythm of half walking and half sliding as we traversed the slope up to our ankles in soft sand. Of course we filled our boots with sand but it was fun.

We headed across the clay pans towards the dunes surrounding Deadvlei, named for the skeletons of the dead acacia trees on the floor of the pan. On the way, we frightened a mob of springboks which bounced away and climbed the face of the dune with amazing ease.

Some of us headed up along the crest of the large dune which runs along the edge of Deadvlei leading up to the highest point in the area. The sand was firm along the crest of the dune and walking was not too difficult where we could step in some one else's tracks. But looking down the very steep slope to Deadvlei about 200 metres below induced a slight feeling of vertigo. Descending the dune into Deadvlei presented a steep challenge to traverse the soft sand of the slope in a controlled sliding walk and once again we had to empty our boots.

While the countryside was so barren and dry, it is also so colourful and incredibly beautiful and a joy to visit.

Story Continued from Page 13...

Hartz Peak, Tasmania

From the car park, we walked through woodland and snow gums, and emerged with views of the dolerite range which extends through the centre of the park and the first glimpse of Hartz Pass.

The vista is of alpine high country. This section of the walk is boardwalk to protect the fragile cushion plants that take 40 years to regenerate if trodden on.

There are several short and steep climbs to Hartz Pass, the trail easy to follow with well-constructed rock paths. Several small glacial lakes are visible from both sides of the Pass.

From Hartz Pass to the summit, the path is erratically marked, with rock scrambling the order of the day. It would not be hard to imagine having to clamber up on hands and knees in windy weather.

After a 400m climb in elevation from the car park to the summit over 3.7km distance we reached the summit (1254m.)

At the summit there are remnants of a trig point, a metal marker only remaining, no structure. Previous summiteers have created a shelter, shaped like a shallow well with walls constructed from the rocks, almost like a castle's turret in ruins.

The views are panoramic, the jagged outline of Federation Peak to the west, and sweeping views of the south-west wilderness all the way to the Southern Ocean. Having completed the South Cape Bay Walk the previous day was a definite advantage because we could identify landmarks from South Cape and the D'entrecasteaux Channel.

The forecast was for an afternoon change, so not wanting

to tempt fate we retraced our steps, taking time to divert to Ladies Tarn and Lake Esperance. King Billy Pines dominate the landscape around Lake Esperance and Ladies Tarn, which are a short side-trip (5 mins) off the main track and well worth the detour. It was only when we arrived back at the car park, we encountered the first human contact all day. Another reminder that even midweek and 90 mins from Hobart, registering your walk in the log-books is important.

Hartz Peak is definitely worth a visit – on a clear day the breathtaking views make you feel as if you are in the heart of the Southwest Wilderness.

Story Continued from Page 15...

Mountain Gorillas, Rwanda

We nearly didn't make it into Rwanda when an immigration officer at Kigali Airport informed us that we did not have the appropriate entry documents and so he would have to send us back to Arusha. But after some vigorous discussion, we were allowed to purchase visas and enter Rwanda.

The Volcanoes National Park is about 100 km north of Kigali or a two hour drive through lovely, green, hilly and amazingly clean countryside (plastic bags have been banned and there is a monthly community clean-up – it shows.) The park covers a range of extinct volcanoes with a minimum altitude of about 2,400 metres, which adds a degree of difficulty in trekking to see the gorillas.

The organisation of our trek almost guaranteed that we would see the gorillas. We had purchased our trek permits (costing \$US500 each and valid for only a specific date) before going to Rwanda. At the Park headquarters, we were allocated into one of the groups of eight people who go out to see the 10 mountain gorilla families that are visited in the park. We then had an hour's drive over some extremely rough road to the edge of the park near our gorilla family.

We set out on foot with the aid of guides and porters along narrow foot paths between farm plots of potatoes and pyrethrum daisies before reaching the rainforest at the edge of the park. Then we scrambled up through the thick rain forest to where the gorillas were living. The path was muddy in parts but fortunately it did not rain so conditions were good for walking.

After about an hour's walk in the forest, we met the trackers who follow the gorilla family group. They told us that the gorilla family were only five minutes away. In another 100 metres we spotted Charles, the silverback disappearing into the undergrowth about 10 metres ahead of us. As we stood gaping, one of the female gorillas blithely pushed through the middle of our group and followed Charles into the bush. We went after them and soon settled down to be entertained by Charles and his family.

The rule is that guests are supposed to stay seven metres from the gorillas but for most of the time we were within two or three metres of about six gorillas – Charles, a large female, two smaller gorillas and two three year olds who put on a display of play and gymnastics which kept us amused. The gorillas seemed totally comfortable with our presence, happily munching on the bamboo shoots and rumbling to each other. They were happy to move around almost pushing us out of their way. We were only allowed to stay with the group for an hour but that was sufficient. It was a fantastic experience.

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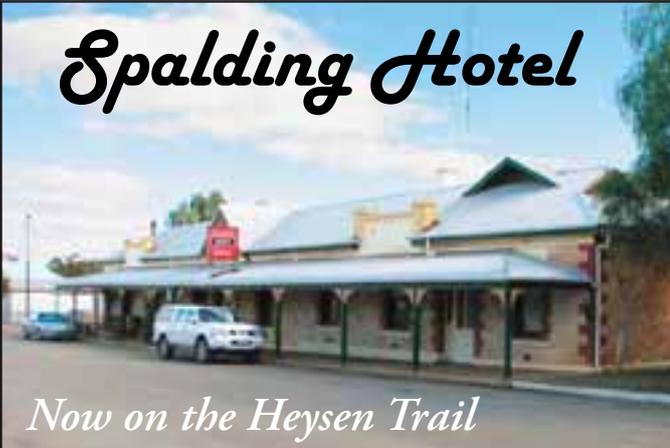
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